

CLAIMS:

What is claimed is:

1. A method of exchanging goods and services in a non-centralized exchange system; the method comprising:
 - 5 registering, by a matchmaker, with at least one of a plurality of directory services;
 - receiving, at a matchmaker, advertisements from a plurality of vendor agents, wherein the plurality of vendor agents obtained the identity and contact information of the matchmaker from the at least one of a plurality of directory services and wherein
 - 10 the advertisements comprise an informational format designated by the matchmaker;
 - obtaining, by a consumer agent, the identity and the contact information about the matchmaker from the at least one directory service;
 - receiving, at the consumer agent, a consumer agent selected list of advertisements from the matchmaker, wherein each advertisement in the selected
 - 15 list of advertisements match criteria specified by the consumer agent;
 - sending, from the consumer agent, a request for a quote to one or more of the vendor agents corresponding to advertisements in the consumer agent selected list of advertisements; and
 - receiving, by the consumer agent, responses from the one or more vendor
 - 20 agents.
2. The method as recited in claim 1, further comprising:
 - completing a purchase of a product from a selected one of the one or more vendor agents replying with an offer for sale.

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3. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the consumer agent selected list of advertisements is provided to the consumer agent for a fee.

4. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

5 5. The method as recited in claim 3, wherein the fee includes a fee per list of advertisements provided to the consumer agent by the matchmaker.

6. The method as recited in claim 1, wherein the matchmaker charges a fee to each of the plurality of vendor agents for listing the advertisements with the matchmaker service.

10 7. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

8. The method as recited in claim 6, wherein the fee includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

9. A method of matching consumers with vendors, the method comprising:
listing a matchmaking service with one or more of a plurality of directory services, wherein each of the plurality of directory services contains contact information for matchmaking services;

15 receiving and carrying advertisements from one or more vendor agents, wherein the one or more vendor agents locate the matchmaking service using the one or more of a plurality of directory services with which the matchmaking service is listed and wherein the advertisements conform to a format dictated by the matchmaking service; and

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responsive to a request from a consumer agent, providing a consumer agent with vendor information.

10. The method as recited in claim 9, further comprising:
organizing the advertisements into categories.
- 5 11. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the vendor information includes vendors listings.
12. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the vendor information includes information about available products.
- 10 13. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the available products include goods.
14. The method as recited in claim 12, wherein the available products include services.
15. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the vendor information includes contact information for vendors.
- 15 16. The method as recited in claim 15, wherein the contact information is provided for a fee.
17. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the vendor information includes a list of advertisements matching criteria supplied by the consumer.

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18. The method as recited in claim 10, wherein the criteria includes a category.

19. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the criteria includes at least one keyword search term.

20. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the criteria includes a selection based upon browsing through listings.

21. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the criteria includes similarity to a selected listing.

22. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein a fee is charged to the consumer agent for providing the list of advertisements sent to the consumer agent.

10 23. The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

24. The method as recited in claim 22, wherein the fee includes a fee per list provided by the matchmaker.

25. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein a fee is charged to the vendor agents for carrying the advertisements.

15 26. The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

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27. The method as recited in claim 25, wherein the fee includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

28. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the advertisements are carried for a limited time.

5 29. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein some of the advertisements are be placed in a position of prominence within a category list in response to receipt of a payment of a premium fee.

30. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category after browsing a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

10 31. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category using a keyword search over the advertisements.

32. the method as recited in claim 9, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category based on the similarity to other selected advertisements.

15 33. The method as recited in claim 9, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category after searching a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

34. A method for a consumer to locate one or more vendors of a product, the method comprising:
finding contact information for one or more matchmakers from a directory service; and

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requesting and receiving from at least one matchmaker a vendor information for a particular category of products.

35. The method as recited in claim 34, wherein the vendor information includes contact information for each vendor.

5 36. The method as recited in claim 34, further comprising:
requesting a quote from one or more vendors on the list of vendors.

37. The method as recited in claim 38, further comprising:
completing a purchase for a product with a selected one of the vendors supplying a quote for the product.

10 38. The method as recited in claim 34, wherein the list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent is selected after a search of available product categories from the matchmaker.

15 39. The method as recited in claim 34, wherein the list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent is selected after browsing a listing of categories available from the matchmaker.

40. The method as recited in claim 34, wherein the list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent is selected using at least one keyword search term.

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41. The method as recited in claim 34, wherein the list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent is selected based on a similarity to a selected listing.

42. A method of selling products, the method comprising:

5 identifying a matchmaker using at least one of a plurality of directory services containing contact information for one or more matchmakers, wherein at least one directory service contains a different set of matchmakers from at least one other directory service;

10 contacting the matchmaker and obtaining advertisement content and format requirements;

15 creating an advertisement complying with advertisement content and format requirements for the matchmaker; and

providing the advertisement to the matchmaker.

43. The method as recited in claim 42, further comprising:

15 providing the matchmaker with a preferred presentation of the advertisement.

44. The method as recited in claim 43, wherein the preferred presentation of the advertisement comprises a preferred placement of the advertisement in a list of advertisements provided to consumer agents.

45. A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for exchanging goods and services in a non-centralized exchange system; the computer program product comprising:

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first instructions for registering, by a matchmaker, with at least one of a plurality of directory services;

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second instructions for receiving, at a matchmaker, advertisements from a plurality of vendor agents, wherein the plurality of vendor agents obtained the identity and contact information of the matchmaker from the at least one of a plurality of directory services and wherein the advertisements comprise an informational format
5 designated by the matchmaker;

third instructions for obtaining, by a consumer agent, the identity and the contact information about the matchmaker from the at least one directory service;

fourth instructions for receiving, at the consumer agent, a consumer agent selected list of advertisements from the matchmaker, wherein the each advertisement
10 in the selected list of advertisements match criteria specified by the consumer agent;

fifth instructions for sending, from the consumer agent, a request for a quote to one or more of the vendor agents corresponding to advertisements in the consumer agent selected list of advertisements; and

sixth instructions for receiving, by the consumer agent, responses from the one
15 or more vendor agents.

46. The computer program product as recited in claim 45, further comprising:
seventh instructions for completing a purchase of a product from a selected one of the one or more vendor agents replying with an offer for sale.

47. The computer program product as recited in claim 45, wherein the consumer
20 agent selected list of advertisements is provided to the consumer agent for a fee.

48. The computer program product as recited in claim 47, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

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49. The computer program product as recited in claim 47, wherein the fee includes a fee per list of advertisements provided to the consumer agent by the matchmaker.

50. The computer program product as recited in claim 45, wherein the 5 matchmaker charges a fee to each of the plurality of vendor agents for listing the advertisements with the matchmaker service.

51. The computer program product as recited in claim 50, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

52. The computer program product as recited in claim 50, wherein the fee 10 includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

53. A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for matching consumers with vendors, the computer program product comprising:

15 first instructions for listing a matchmaking service with one or more of a plurality of directory services, wherein each of the plurality of directory services contains contact information for matchmaking services;

second instructions for receiving and carrying advertisements from one or more vendor agents, wherein the one or more vendor agents locate the matchmaking service using the one or more of a plurality of directory services with which the 20 matchmaking service is listed and wherein the advertisements conform to a format dictated by the matchmaking service; and

third instructions, responsive to a request from a consumer agent, for providing a consumer agent with vendor information.

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54. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, further comprising:
fourth instructions for organizing the advertisements into categories.

55. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the vendor
information includes vendors listings.

5 56. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the vendor
information includes information about available products.

57. The computer program product as recited in claim 56, wherein the available
products include goods.

10 58. The computer program product as recited in claim 56, wherein the available
products include services.

59. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the vendor
information includes contact information for vendors.

60. The computer program product as recited in claim 59, wherein the contact
information is provided for a fee.

15 61. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the vendor
information includes a list of advertisements matching criteria supplied by the
consumer.

62. The computer program product as recited in claim 54, wherein the criteria
includes a category.

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56. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the criteria includes at least one keyword search term.

57. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the criteria includes a selection based upon browsing through listings.

58. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the criteria includes similarity to a selected listing.

59. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein a fee is charged to the consumer agent for providing the list of advertisements sent to the consumer agent.

60. The computer program product as recited in claim 66, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

61. The computer program product as recited in claim 66, wherein the fee includes a fee per list provided by the matchmaker.

62. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein a fee is charged to the vendor agents for carrying the advertisements.

63. The computer program product as recited in claim 69, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

64. The computer program product as recited in claim 69, wherein the fee includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

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72. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the advertisements are carried for a limited time.

73. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein some of the advertisements are be placed in a position of prominence within a category list in
5 response to receipt of a payment of a premium fee.

74. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category after browsing a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

75. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the consumer
10 agent selects the requested category using a keyword search over the advertisements.

76. the computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category based on the similarity to other selected advertisements.

77. The computer program product as recited in claim 53, wherein the consumer
15 agent selects the requested category after searching a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

78. A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for a consumer to locate one or more vendors of a product, the computer program product comprising:
20 first instructions for finding contact information for one or more matchmakers from a directory service; and

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second instructions for requesting and receiving from at least one matchmaker vendor information for a particular category of products.

79. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, wherein the vendor information includes contact information for each vendor.

5 80. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, further comprising:
third instructions for requesting a quote from one or more vendors on the list
of vendors.

10 81. The computer program product as recited in claim 80, further comprising:
fourth instructions for completing a purchase for a product with a selected one
of the vendors supplying a quote for the product.

82. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent the list of vendors is selected after a search of available product categories from the matchmaker.

15 83. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent the list of vendors is selected after browsing a listing of categories available from the matchmaker.

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84. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent the list of vendors is selected using at least one keyword search term.

5 85. The computer program product as recited in claim 78, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent the list of vendors is selected based on a similarity to a selected listing.

10 86. A computer program product in a computer readable media for use in a data processing system for selling products, the computer program product comprising:
first instructions for identifying a matchmaker using at least one of a plurality of directory services containing contact information for one or more matchmakers, wherein at least one directory service contains a different set of matchmakers from at least one other directory service;

15 second instructions for contacting the matchmaker and obtaining advertisement content and format requirements;
third instructions for creating an advertisement complying with advertisement content and format requirements for the matchmaker; and
fourth instructions for providing the advertisement to the matchmaker.

20 87. The computer program product as recited in claim 86, further comprising:
fifth instructions for providing the matchmaker with a preferred presentation of the advertisement.

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88. The computer program product as recited in claim 87, wherein the preferred presentation of the advertisement comprises a preferred placement of the advertisement in a list of advertisements provided to consumer agents.

89. A system for exchanging goods and services in a non-centralized exchange
5 system; the system comprising:

- a first component in a matchmaker which registers with at least one of a plurality of directory services;
- a second component in the matchmaker which receives advertisements from a plurality of vendor agents, wherein the plurality of vendor agents obtain the identity and contact information of the matchmaker from the at least one of a plurality of directory services and wherein the advertisements comprise an informational format designated by the matchmaker;
- a third component in a consumer agent which obtains the identity and the contact information about the matchmaker from the at least one directory service;
- 15 a fourth component in the consumer agent which receives consumer agent selected list of advertisements from the matchmaker, wherein the each advertisement in the selected list of advertisements match criteria specified by the consumer agent;
- a fifth component in the consumer agent which sends a request for a quote to one or more of the vendor agents corresponding to advertisements in the consumer
20 agent selected list of advertisements; and
- a sixth component in the consumer agent which receives responses from the one or more vendor agents.

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90. The system as recited in claim 89, further comprising:
a seventh component in the consumer agent which completes a purchase of a product from a selected one of the one or more vendor agents replying with an offer for sale.

5 91. The system as recited in claim 89, wherein the consumer agent selected list of advertisements is provided to the consumer agent for a fee.

92. The system as recited in claim 91, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

10 93. The system as recited in claim 91, wherein the fee includes a fee per list of advertisements provided to the consumer agent by the matchmaker.

94. The system as recited in claim 89, wherein the matchmaker charges a fee to each of the plurality of vendor agents for listing the advertisements with the matchmaker service.

95. The system as recited in claim 94, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

15 96. The system as recited in claim 94, wherein the fee includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

97. A system for matching consumers with vendors, the system comprising:
a first component which lists a matchmaking service with one or more of a plurality of directory services, wherein each of the plurality of directory services
20 contains contact information for matchmaking services;

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a second component which receives and carries advertisements from one or more vendor agents, wherein the one or more vendor agents locate the matchmaking service using the one or more of a plurality of directory services with which the matchmaking service is listed and wherein the advertisements conform to a format
5 dictated by the matchmaking service; and

a third component which, responsive to a request from a consumer agent, provides a consumer agent with vendor information.

98. The system as recited in claim 97, further comprising:

a fourth component which organizes the advertisements into categories.

10 99. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the vendor information includes vendors listings.

100. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the vendor information includes information about available products.

15 101. The system as recited in claim 100, wherein the available products include goods.

102. The system as recited in claim 100, wherein the available products include services.

103. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the vendor information includes contact information for vendors.

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104. The system as recited in claim 103, wherein the contact information is provided for a fee.

105. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the vendor information includes a list of advertisements matching criteria supplied by the consumer.

5 106. The system as recited in claim 98, wherein the criteria includes a category.

107. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the criteria includes at least one keyword search term.

108. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the criteria includes a selection based upon browsing through listings.

10 109. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the criteria includes similarity to a selected listing.

110. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein a fee is charged to the consumer agent for providing the list of advertisements sent to the consumer agent.

15 111. The system as recited in claim 110, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee to the matchmaker service.

112. The system as recited in claim 110, wherein the fee includes a fee per list provided by the matchmaker.

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113. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein a fee is charged to the vendor agents for carrying the advertisements.

114. The system as recited in claim 113, wherein the fee includes a subscription fee.

5 115. The system as recited in claim 113, wherein the fee includes a fee per advertisement listed with the matchmaker.

116. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the advertisements are carried for a limited time.

10 117. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein some of the advertisements are be placed in a position of prominence within a category list in response to receipt of a payment of a premium fee.

118. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category after browsing a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

15 119. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category using a keyword search over the advertisements.

120. the system as recited in claim 97, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category based on the similarity to other selected advertisements.

121. The system as recited in claim 97, wherein the consumer agent selects the requested category after searching a category listing provided by the matchmaker.

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122. A system for a consumer to locate one or more vendors of a product, the system comprising:

a first component which finds contact information for one or more matchmakers from a directory service; and

5 a second component which requests and receives from at least one matchmaker vendor information for a particular category of products.

123. The system as recited in claim 122, wherein the vendor information includes contact information for each vendor.

124. The system as recited in claim 122, further comprising:

10 a third component which requests a quote from one or more vendors on the list of vendors.

125. The system as recited in claim 124, further comprising:

a fourth component which completes a purchase for a product with a selected one of the vendors supplying a quote for the product.

15 126. The system as recited in claim 122, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent and the list of vendors is selected after a search of available product categories from the matchmaker.

20 127. The system as recited in claim 122, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent and the list of vendors is selected after browsing a listing of categories available from the matchmaker.

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128. The system as recited in claim 122, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent and the list of vendors is selected using at least one keyword search term.

129. The system as recited in claim 122, wherein the vendor information includes a list of vendors for a particular category of products requested by the consumer agent, the list of vendors is selected based on a similarity to a selected listing.

130. A system for selling products, the system comprising:
a first component which identifies a matchmaker using at least one of a plurality of directory services containing contact information for one or more matchmakers, wherein at least one directory service contains a different set of matchmakers from at least one other directory service;
a second component which contacts the matchmaker and obtains advertisement content and format requirements;
a third component which creates an advertisement complying with advertisement content and format requirements for the matchmaker; and
a fourth component which provides the advertisement to the matchmaker.

131. The system as recited in claim 130, further comprising:
a fifth component which provides the matchmaker with a preferred presentation of the advertisement.

132. The system as recited in claim 131, wherein the preferred presentation of the advertisement comprises a preferred placement of the advertisement in a list of advertisements provided to consumer agents.

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